



March 6, 2008

Senator John McCain
John McCain 2008
P.O. Box 16118
Arlington, VA 22215

Dear Senator McCain:

Congratulations on your selection as your party's presumptive nominee.

As you may know, yesterday a Republican group of our Senate colleagues introduced a new package of immigration bills focusing on harsher enforcement without addressing the many other problems that must be fixed and that a comprehensive approach to immigration reform would have fixed. At the same time, Republicans in the House of Representatives are attempting to use parliamentary tricks to force an "enforcement-only" immigration bill to the House floor for a vote without going through the normal order of business. I understand from one news report today that your campaign has signed off on this House strategy ("GOP Pushes Discharge for Shuler Border Bill", National Journal's *CongressDailyAM*, March 6, 2008).

Your work on comprehensive immigration reform in the Senate is well known. Your efforts, helped pass the 2006 legislation, which was tough but smart and civil. It was legislation that would have protected our borders, strengthened our economy, and protected our legacy as a nation of immigrants. It was legislation that addressed the range of breakdowns in the current immigration system without demeaning or manipulating the Latino population for political gain.

That is why I am tremendously concerned with the report that your campaign gave its blessing to a draconian and divisive Republican immigration policy strategy – a strategy geared toward creating a wedge issue in November rather than actually solving our nation's immigration problems through serious solutions. Knowing your prior stance on immigration, it is hard for me to believe that you would ever support this kind of strategy.

I respectfully ask that you, as a past supporter of comprehensive immigration reform, definitively reject both the Republican immigration package introduced yesterday in the Senate and the House Republican strategy to force a vote on the Shuler bill. Such a rejection will let this nation's 44 million Latinos know that demonizing them for political purposes will not be tolerated and that the more hateful rhetoric in the immigration debate has no place in our country's civic discourse. It also will signal to many in the Republican party that comprehensive immigration reform in fact gives us the best chance of fixing the broken system.

I thank you for considering this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
United States Senator